

Mount Ed Baptist Church
N side State Rte. 635
Batesville
Albemarle County
Virginia

HABS VA-999

HABS,
VA,
2-BATE
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ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

REDUCED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013

Addendum to
Mount Ed Baptist Church
Batesville
Albemarle County
Virginia

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MOUNT ED BAPTIST CHURCH

HABS No. VA-999

Location: Batesville, Albemarle County, Virginia
U.T.M. Coordinates: 17.69949.420705
(Covesville, Virginia
Quadrangle)

Present Owner: Trustees of Mount Ed Baptist Church

Present Occupant: Mount Ed Baptist Church congregation

Present Use: House of worship

Statement of
Significance: This building is one of the oldest Baptist Churches in Albemarle County and is typical of the type of structure erected by Baptist congregations in that section of piedmont Virginia just prior to the Civil War. Its design was based upon a Baptist church in Nelson County, Virginia, and, in turn, it served as the prototype for the Methodist Church in Batesville.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The church was constructed on a tract of land of one and one-half acres located across Route 635 from the old Mount Ed Church which was subsequently torn down. One acre of this tract was exchanged for the old church grounds by Nicholas M. Page, clerk of Mount Ed. The remaining one-half acre had been previously donated by Martha P. Black. In October, 1899, N. M. Page conveyed to the trustees of Mount Ed a small additional tract of land adjoining the church yard to be used as a burying ground.

Construction of the building: The church was contracted to be 44' 9" X 58' 9" and to cost \$3,500.00. It was dedicated July 19, 1857.

2. Date of erection: 1856-57.

3. Architect: The architect and builders are unknown. Adiel Baptist Church in Nelson County, Virginia, constructed about 1854, served as a design source for Mount Ed. John E. Massey, pastor at both Adiel and Mount Ed from 1854 to 1862, was possibly responsible for basing the design of Mount Ed upon Adiel. However, Joseph H. Fox, minister to Mount Ed and possibly Adiel during the planning for construction of both churches, may have been involved in determining the design for both buildings. The origin of this design is unknown.
4. Alterations and additions: A space of about 7' 3" of the south (front) end of the church was partitioned off to form a narthex. Woodwork incorporated in this partition indicates a late nineteenth century date for this addition. A portion of the gallery on the east side was partitioned within the last few years to form a small Sunday School room. A temporary concrete block addition was constructed on the north (rear) side of the church in 1961 to house the furnace and provide Sunday School rooms. Two doors were opened through the brick wall of the exedra-like niche to give access to these rooms from the nave. A baptismal font was installed under the pulpit about 1890. A concrete ring wall was poured around the foundation in 1934. Possibly the concrete steps were added to the south (front) entrances at the same date. The steps to the east and west doors are missing. The original south (front) doors were replaced in 1961. The doors on the east and west sides are original but lack hardware. A small portion of the original beaded vertical wainscoting survives; most has been replaced by plywood. Electricity and central heating were installed in 1961. The original pews were replaced in 1976. One shutter (on the middle window of the west side) is missing; all others remain in place although some slats are absent. All of the shutter hooks are gone.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

1. Mount Ed Baptist Church was probably founded in 1788 by Benjamin Burger who served as the first pastor. Originally called "White Sides Creek Church" (from a nearby stream of the same name) the meeting was renamed "Mount Ed" (possibly derived from Joshua 22:34) when a new brick building was erected in 1806 on the site. The present building was erected in 1856-57 on a new site across Route 635 from the old church which was then torn down. The church probably suffered little or no damage during the Civil War. Membership, however, declined in the years between 1861 and 1868. Black people withdrew almost completely from the church during this period. Membership began to decline again around 1900, and church services ceased entirely in the winter of 1934. In 1942 Sunday School and church services were begun again but ceased in 1943. The building remained abandoned until 1961 when the congregation was reactivated and the structure reconditioned with the help of members of Hebron Baptist Church, Nelson County, Virginia.
2. The following pastors served the church:
 - Benjamin Burger (1788-1822)
 - William Duncan (?) (1824?)
 - Porter Cleveland (c.1824-1841)
 - Isaac S. Tinsley (1841-c.1843)
 - Joseph H. Fox (1843-1853)
 - John E. Massey (1854-1862)
 - Samuel Poindexter Huff (1863-1887)
 - Bryon Hooker DeMent (1888-1891)
 - W. H. Savage (1891-1892)
 - Hartwell K. Hawthorne (1892-sometime between 1900 and 1903)
 - J. L. Wiley (1903-1908)
 - C. E. Kirkwood (1909) (supply)
 - L. Peyton Little (1910-1912) (supply)
 - W. L. Britt (1913-c.1915)
 - Billings (?) (1915?-1916?) (supply?)
 - I. B. Cook (c.1919)
 - R. F. Hopkins (1921-1923)
 - H. J. Parker (1925) (supply)
 - R. E. L. Aylor (1926-1930) (supply)
 - J. L. Wiley (1930-31) (supply)
 - John Robert Stiff (1942-43) (supply)
 - John Mann, Sr. (1962-1963)
 - Marvin J. Southard (1964-1966)
 - Richard C. Walden, Jr. (1967-1970)
 - Ronald J. Nickell (1973-)

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character. This is a typical example of the Greek Revival Baptist churches built in Piedmont Virginia during the ante-bellum era.
2. Condition of Fabric. Good.

B. Exterior Description

1. Overall Dimensions. This one storey structure is rectangular in plan. Overall dimensions, including the recent addition, are 44' 10" X 75' 0". Overall dimensions of the original structures are 44' 10" X 61' 7" including a small rectangular projection (2' 8" X 11' 6") on the north (rear) wall which is now obscured by the recent classroom addition.
2. Foundation. Foundation walls are inaccessible. New sub-grade walls of concrete were installed in 1934 to prevent deterioration of the foundation walls.
3. Wall Construction, Finish, and Color. Walls are of load bearing brick masonry construction. Pilasters divide the walls into four bays on the east and west and into two bays on the south. The north (rear) wall has no pilasters. Wall thickness at pilasters is eighteen inches; panels between pilasters are fourteen inches thick as is the north wall. The three walls of the small rectangular projection on the north are nine inches thick. All walls are laid in common bond excepting one header course which forms the sill of each panel between pilasters and another header course five courses below the sill/header course just mentioned. The walls of the building are in good condition. In some areas mortar joints have been repointed. Older mortar joints show evidence of having had painted white lines at one time. The architrave, freize, and tympanum are also of brick construction but have been stuccoed and painted white.

4. Structural Systems. Walls are of load bearing brick masonry. Floor framing is inaccessible, but church members report it to be of wood timbers. Roof framing consists of four wood trusses with a purlin system to transfer roof loads to the trusses.
5. Stoops. The two stoops on the south (front) wall are of concrete with metal pipe railings and probably date from 1934 when the foundation walls were reinforced.
6. Chimneys. There are no chimneys within the older fabric. The single existing chimney is part of the classroom addition and was built to serve the furnace installed during the construction of the classroom addition in 1961.
7. Openings.
 - a. Doorways/Doors. The entrance front on the south side of the building is divided by pilasters into two bays. Each of these bays contains an entrance consisting of double doors topped by a two-light transom, all framed by simple architrave moldings. Only the architrave mouldings are original. The doors, their hardware, and the transoms are of modern manufacture and were installed in 1961. On both the east and west (side) walls a single door at the south (front) end gives entrance to a small stairhall serving the gallery. The architrave moldings of these doorways are identical to those of the front. The doors themselves are of simple four panel design and have no hardware at this time, although evidence of earlier hardware remains. Church members report that the front doors were identical in design with the side doors.
 - b. Windows/Shutters. On each side of the church three of our four bays contain triple hung windows approximately five feet wide and twelve feet high. While

the twelve-light sashes date from 1961, the sills, jambs and heads of the windows are original excepting slight modifications required by the installation of the new sashes.

Exterior paired shutters with fixed louvers occur at each window excepting the west side where one shutter is missing.

3. Roof. The gable roof of the church is covered by tin panels whose ribs are on 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ " centers. The tin is painted an aluminum color.

C. Interior Description

1. Floor Plans

- a. Crawl Space. Direct observation of the crawl space under the church is not possible; all entrances were blocked during the 1961 renovation/remodelling of the church. Church members report that a low dirt-floored crawl space does exist under the church. The classroom addition of 1961 contains a full basement with furnace room.
- b. First Floor. The entrance doorways on the front open into a narrow transverse narthex which gives access to the nave and additionally to the gallery stairhalls. Moldings and construction details of the partition wall between the narthex and the nave suggest this wall is of later date and that originally the entrance doorways opened directly into the nave.
The nave is rectangular with dimensions of approximately 42' X 49'. A combined pulpit/baptistry is located at the north end of the nave and is emphasized by a small rectangular niche with surround. The baptistry was constructed about 1890, but the niche and pulpit are contemporary with the rest of the structure.

- c. Gallery. The gallery, reached by the two stairs on either side of the narthex, extends around the east, west, and south (over the narthex) sides of the nave. A portion of the gallery on the east side has been recently partitioned to create a small classroom. The gallery balustrade is treated as a full entablature supported on simple box columns of classic inspiration.
2. Stairways. The two gallery stairs are of very simple wood construction with a simple wood handrail. Access to each stair hall is from either the exterior side doors or the interior doors of the narthex.
3. Flooring. Carpet and asphalt tile cover the floors of the vestibule, the stairhalls, and the pulpitbaptistry. The nave and the gallery are floored with yellow pine boards five inches in width. The gallery floor has been painted; the nave floor has been recently (1976) sanded and sealed with a clear finish.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish. Wall finish is smooth plaster painted white. Small areas of beaded vertical board wainscot also exist. The ceiling finish is also plaster but of a very rough texture.
5. Doorways/Doors. The extremely simple four panel interior doors are framed by simple architrave moldings. The doors between the nave and narthex, thought to be of a later date (as is the entire partition) are typical of the late nineteenth century with glass in the two upper panels, a circular motif in the corner blocks, and incised cuts in the doorways. All doorways and doors are painted white.
6. Trim. Simple boards are used as chair rails and baseboards. Window trim is also very simple using only rectangular and beveled sections to form an architrave molding. The niche surround is composed of paired, fluted pilasters supporting a full entablature similar to that of the gallery balustrade. All trim is painted white.

7. Hardware. All interior hardware is of modern manufacture.
8. Lighting. All lighting is modern, consisting of simple square recessed ceiling fixtures and two chandeliers derived from eighteenth century prototypes.
9. Heating. A modern forced hot air heating system, installed in 1961, is used. No evidence of earlier heating systems (if any) remains.

D. Site

1. General Setting and Orientation. The church is oriented on approximately a north-south axis on a prominent hill. Many mature deciduous and coniferous trees enhance the site. The church burying ground is located to the rear of the church. A modern residence, used by the minister, lies 150' southwest of the church.
2. Outbuildings.
 - a. Privy. A small wooden privy is located about 125' east of the church. The wooden bench with one seat covers an earthen well.

PART III PROJECT INFORMATION

This class project was undertaken by the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia under the direction of K. Edward Lay, Associate Professor of Architecture, measured and drawn during the Fall Semester 1976, by Barbara Hume Church, Graduate Architectural History student, and Michael Francis Conner, Graduate Architectural History student.

This documentation was donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey, and was not produced under HABS supervision, nor was it edited by HABS staff.